

## **Ernest Hemingway**

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Ernest Hemingway was a great writer who helped revolutionize the way people write today. Talented and outgoing, he wrote short stories and novels, many of which involved male activities of hunting and fishing. His stories earned him a number of prizes including the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature.

Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899 in Oak Park, Illinois. He was the second of six children. The environment that he grew up in was very safe, away from drugs and alcohol and very close to nature. His mother liked to perform as a hobby and taught music; his father, though depressed later in life, loved the outdoors and male activities such as camping, hunting and fishing. When Hemingway was just seven weeks old, he was first taken out to experience the great outdoors on his father's lake shore property. He even caught his first fish when he was three years old. He could also count, spell, and build with blocks around that age.

In school, many of Hemingway's subjects required him to write. He read many books even though he had much school work. He liked stories about great Americans and wrote stories where he was the main hero. In addition to his school work and early writing, Hemingway was determined to excel at physical activities. Besides hunting and fishing, he played many sports.

Hemingway did not go to college. His first job was reporting for the Kansas City Star newspaper in October 1917. He wrote articles on police work and investigations. Even then, people were impressed by his writing. But in April 1918 he quit the Kansas

City Star to serve as an ambulance driver in World War I. When he was injured by an explosion and gun wound, he was taken to a hospital and had an affair with a nurse there named Agnes Von Kurowsky. She was transferred to another hospital so they were forced to break up.

After he returned to Chicago, Hemingway met Elizabeth Hadley Richardson at a friend's house. Despite the fact that she was eight years older than he, they married on September 3, 1920. He had a free-lance connection with the Toronto Star to which he submitted an occasional article to earn money while they lived in Paris. Hemingway and Hadley had their first child in October 1923.

Hemingway resigned from the Toronto Star on January 1, 1924, and lived from the money of the stories that he was publishing. His wife found that he was having an affair with an editor from Arkansas named Pauline Pfeiffer. Hemingway felt guilty for this, so he gave all of the profit from his book The Sun Also Rises to Hadley and his son. Hemingway divorced Hadley and later married Pauline.

Hemingway and Pfeiffer had two sons. But Hemingway had another affair with Martha Gelhorn and divorced Pauline Pfeiffer in 1939. In 1940, he married Martha Gelhorn. Martha had a career of her own so Hemingway bought himself a house in Cuba and lived there. In 1944, he met Mary Welsh and fell in love with her. He divorced Martha Gelhorn and married Mary Welsh.

Hemingway had a long period when he did not publish anything. But his life in Cuba finally inspired him to write a great fishing story, The Old Man and the Sea, which won him the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. On October 28, 1954, he was notified that he won the Nobel Prize, but he could not attend the ceremony because of poor health. On July 2,

1961, with his health declining, Ernest Hemingway shot himself in the head while in a log cabin in Ketchikan, Idaho.

A story written early in Hemingway's career that shows his love of fishing is "Big Two-Hearted River." It is about a man named Nick who wants to escape the harsh life of serving in World War I. He goes to the burned down countryside near a river to relax. When Nick gets there, he sets up a camp and looks at his life in retrospect. In the morning, he catches grasshoppers and uses them as bait to fish trout. The description of the river, woods, and especially fishing the trout reflect Hemingway's intimate knowledge of fishing.

"The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is a story about an American man named Francis Macomber and his wife Margot, on a safari in Africa. It was written relatively close to the middle of Hemingway's career. Francis wounds a lion and runs away. His wife calls him a coward for running. Then, to redeem himself, Francis kills a buffalo the next day and faces another buffalo that is charging at him. His wife, who is watching from the car, shoots at the buffalo and hits her husband, killing him when he had just redeemed himself by proving that he was fearless.

A story that takes place after a hunting safari is, "Snows of Kilimanjaro." A novelist named Harry gets gangrene poisoning in the bush from an accidental brush on his leg and he reviews his life. When he goes to sleep, Harry dreams that he goes to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, also known as the House of God, in a rescue plane and sees a legendary leopard that no one knew was there.

Many say that The Old Man and the Sea is the novel that directly led to Hemingway's awarding of the Nobel Prize. The story is about a Cuban fisherman named

Santiago and his trials with a giant marlin. He hooks the marlin and it pulls him for three days until he finally catches it. Santiago has to tie the fish to the side of his boat because of its size. In the end, before the old man returns to land, sharks eat the glorious catch that he made and he returns with a skeleton of the fish. This is much more than a simple fishing story; it shows the perseverance of a human heart and the deep determination of even the simplest of people. Santiago even says in the story, “But a man is not made for defeat, a man can be destroyed but not defeated.”

Ernest Hemingway was a great writer and expressed his love for the great outdoors through his writing. He was famous for his minimalist writing style and for writing many stories told in a believable dialogue. His best hunting and fishing stories were much more than just stories. They had great lessons and themes from which we all can learn. [From “Ernest Miller Hemingway,”

[http://www.ernest.hemingway.com/default.htm\(1999\)](http://www.ernest.hemingway.com/default.htm(1999)) (Oct. 26, 2005); Ernest

Hemingway, In Our Time; Ernest Hemingway. The Old Man and the Sea; “Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber.” [http://www.britannica.com/nobel/micro/734\\_16.html](http://www.britannica.com/nobel/micro/734_16.html);

“Snows of Kilimanjaro.” [http://www.britannica.com/nobel/micro/734\\_21.html](http://www.britannica.com/nobel/micro/734_21.html) (Oct. 26, 2005).]